

Titus Andronicus

Cast

Titus Andronicus *David Troughton*
Tamora *Harriet Walter*
Aaron *Paterson Joseph*
Marcus *David Burke*
Saturninus *Ian Hughes*
Lavinia *Emma Gregory*
Lucius *Will Keen*
Chiron *John McAndrew*
Demetrius *Charles Simpson*
Bassianus *Nicholas Murchie*
Aemilius *Nigel Cooke*
Mutius *Alisdair Simpson*
Quintus *Alex Lowe*
Martius *Chris Pavlo*
Nurse *Marjorie Yates*
Young Lucius *Steven Geller*
Other parts played by members of the cast

Play description

ACT I

Scene 1. Titus Andronicus returns to Rome in triumph after 10 years at war with the Goths. He and his four sons bring their prisoners: the Gothic queen Tamora, her sons Alarbus, Demetrius, and Chiron, and her lover Aaron. Ignoring Tamora's appeal for mercy, Titus orders the sacrifice of Alarbus to the spirits of his own dead sons. Titus's brother Marcus presses him to stand for the Imperial throne against Saturninus and Bassianus, the sons of the late emperor. Titus refuses and advises the people to choose Saturninus, who promptly asks for the hand of Titus's daughter Lavinia. She, however, is already betrothed to Bassianus who abducts her with the help of her brothers. In the ensuing scuffle, Titus kills his son Mutius, who tries to bar his way. Saturninus accuses Titus of complicity with Bassianus and angrily dismisses him. He chooses Tamora for his Empress. Having at first refused his brother's and sons' pleas that Mutius should be buried in the family tomb, Titus eventually acquiesces. Bassianus attempts to intercede with Saturninus on Titus's behalf. Tamora also begs for clemency for Titus, revealing privately to the Emperor that she is merely biding her time before bloodily revenging the murder of her son. She makes peace between all the quarrelling factions.

ACT II

Scene 1. Aaron suggests that Chiron and Demetrius satisfy their lust for Lavinia by raping her during the forthcoming hunt.

Scene 2. Titus and his sons are hunting with Bassianus and Lavinia. Saturninus, Tamora, Demetrius and Chiron are also present.

Scene 3. Aaron discloses that he has a plan that "will beget/A very excellent piece of villainy." Tamora enters in an amorous mood, but Aaron can think only of revenge and tells her of her sons' plan to ravage Lavinia and murder Bassianus. Lavinia and Bassianus accuse Tamora of infidelity to the Emperor. Demetrius and Chiron then murder Bassianus. Lavinia, terrified of losing her honor, pleads for death. Tamora, remembering Titus's refusal to spare the life of Alarbus, is unrelenting. Aaron lures Martius and Quintus to the pit where Bassianus's body has been dumped, thus incriminating them in the murder. A letter is then produced which apparently proves their guilt. The Emperor swears that they will be executed. Tamora assures Titus that she will petition Saturninus on his behalf, and that he should have no fear for his sons.

Scene 4. Marcus finds the raped Lavinia in the forest. She has had both hands amputated and her tongue cut out so as to prevent her from identifying her attackers.

ACT III

Scene 1. Despite Titus's desperate pleas, Martius and Quintus are condemned to death. Marcus brings the mutilated Lavinia to her father and brother Lucius. Aaron comes from the Emperor stating that if

one of the Andronici will send his severed hand, Quintus and Martius will be reprieved. Lucius, Marcus and Titus are each determined to make the sacrifice, but Titus orders Aaron to cut off his hand and take it to Saturninus. The hand is subsequently returned to Titus, along with the heads of his two sons. Titus vows revenge and sends Lucius to the Goths, to raise an army.

Scene 2. Half crazed with grief, Titus dines with what remains of his family.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Using her stumps, Lavinia turns to the story in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* which tells of Tereus's rape of Philomel, thus revealing her own fate to her family. She then takes a stick in her mouth and writes the names of Chiron and Demetrius in the sand.

Scene 2. Titus sends his grandson to Chiron and Demetrius with a gift of weapons and a cryptic message; only Aaron understands the reference to their guilt. Tamora has given birth to Aaron's son. When Demetrius and Chiron insist the baby should die, Aaron defends it, saying that a substitute must be found. Having killed the nurse who witnessed the birth, he leaves Rome, with the child.

Scene 3. Titus, apparently out of his mind, goes around Rome dispersing messages for the gods, attached to arrows.

Scene 4. Saturninus is disturbed by Titus's behaviour. When he learns that Lucius is advancing with a Gothic army, he fears that the Romans may side with him. Tamora seeks to calm him and organizes a meeting with Lucius.

ACT V

Scene 1. Aaron and his son are captured by the Goths. Once Lucius has sworn that he will not harm the baby, Aaron gloatingly recounts his central role in the horrors committed against the Andronici.

Scene 2. Tamora visits Titus, claiming that she is Revenge, come to help him against his enemies. She believes that she now has the crazed old man in her power and tells him to invite Lucius to dine at his house. She then leaves, but agrees that her sons should stay with him. Titus, however, is entirely aware of the reality of the situation and, summoning Lavinia to witness the act, he cuts Demetrius' and Chiron's throats.

Scene 3. A banquet is given by Titus for the opposing leaders. He kills Lavinia, to save her from the ineradicable shame of rape, and then tells Tamora that she has been eating a pie made from the flesh of her sons. He stabs her, is in turn slain by Saturninus, who is then killed by Lucius. Lucius becomes Emperor and sentences Aaron to death by starvation. Titus and Lavinia are to be buried honorably, but Tamora's body is thrown to the beasts and birds of prey.

Track list

Disk 1

Track 1 Act I Scene i
(up to line 66)
Track 2 Act I Scene i
(from line 67-152)
Track 3 Act I Scene i
(from 153-401)
Track 4 Act I Scene i
(from line 402)
Track 5 Act II Scene i
Track 6 Act II Scene ii
Track 7 Act II Scene iii
(up to line 191)

Disk 2

Track 1 Act II Scene iii
(from line 192)
Track 2 Act II Scene iv
Track 3 Act III Scene i
Track 4 Act III Scene ii
Track 5 Act IV Scene I

Disk 3

Track 1 Act IV Scene ii
Track 2 Act IV Scene iii
Track 3 Act IV Scene iv
Track 4 Act V Scene i
Track 5 Act V Scene ii
Track 6 Act V Scene iii
(up to line 66)
Track 7 Act V Scene iii
(from line 67)